

MILLIONS IN CHINA STILL ILLITERATES

Despite Popular Opinion Celestial Empire Is Steeped in Ignorance.

By JOSEPH TIMMONS. SHANGHAI, March 27.—The American hot water bottle has gained quite a vogue in China. In some cities it is the latest fad. In one center of Christian missionary influence well-to-do Chinese now come to each with a silver bottle slipped easily against the "tummy."

In another city where a missionary university is the center of culture, a teacher recently gave a suit of American underwear to a Chinese friend. To his astonishment the next Sunday the Chinese marched proudly into the university church with this suit outside his own Chinese costume.

Awakening China is much interested in Occidental customs, and it is becoming quite the thing to substitute minor details of these for some of their own. The result is not always what they suppose. For instance, a Chinese friend recently sent me a scroll of congratulation and good wishes to the principals in a wedding. Chinese affected by foreign influence have learned that we send flowers for funerals. Often they get the scroll for the funeral of a young man, and the scroll is for a wedding.

Invitation Breaks Precedent. An American showed me recently with some excitement a wedding invitation he had just received. It was printed in Chinese characters in gold on a red card, and the unusual thing about it was that it had the name of the bride-to-be as well as the name of the man. My friend, who knows China thoroughly, said it was the first card he had ever seen that announced the bride's identity.

White Mourning Color. White is the color of mourning in China, and brides wear costumes of vermilion red, known as Chinese red. It is about the reddest thing there is. But Chinese girls educated in the mission schools falling under the influence of these so-called Western missionaries, have learned that we wear white, so they are compromising now on pink.

Even Boxes Can't Box. Chinese coolies in controversy never come to blows, though they quarrel vociferously and gesticulate dramatically. They do not know how to use the fists and only clasp each other in a struggle and then the quarrel becomes very serious. Sometimes one will grasp the other by the queue, close to the head and lead him whirling away to where there is room for a good swift kick.

In our sympathy for the Chinese and our desire to see China protected against foreign aggression we are inclined to think of the Chinese republic in terms of our own. Our sympathy will be more wisely directed and more helpful if we keep in mind the vast differences.

Mr. X. knows whether China has 200,000,000 people or 400,000,000. That is to say, census returns have been so inaccurate that no one can guess within a hundred million—which is approximately the total population of the United States—of the actual population of China.

But it is fairly well known that of this vast total, whatever it is, only about two million persons can read or write. Four hundred million are commonly accepted as the population; if that figure be accepted, then there are about 28,000,000 who can neither read nor write. Many many years will be required to extend education little by little to this great mass of illiterates.

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Missionary Is "Stewing" Over Tires, Not Fires

(By Universal Service.)

CHICAGO, March 27.—The old-fashioned missionary who used to harangue the pressive cannibals while being boiled in the evening's soup is fast vanishing. The modern missionary now preaches from the tonneau of an automobile.

Professor Albin W. Smith, of the University of Chicago, in explaining why the survey of the Northern Hemisphere new world movement include twenty-five automobiles, said Baptist ministers in Assam, Borneo, India, Africa and other wilds already are equipped with "devil wagons."

A missionary with an automobile, he said, "can do three times as much work as one without."

These customs, when bound up with superstitions and religious practices, are often hampering and prevent progress, in the main they are based on fundamental justice and the rights of the individual. The family is the outstanding institution, and customs are most generally enforced by the family, and after the family by the community. In the family the father is the head, with undisputed authority over children and grandchildren and attached relations. But if his wife survives him, a venerable wife old lady, she wields like undisputed authority, strange, to say, in this land where in other relations woman counts for so little.

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STARS SHY AT FEATURE STUNTS IN PHOTOPLAYS

Many High-Priced Actors Employ Understudies for Dangerous Feats in Cinemas.

(By Universal Service.)

LONDON, March 27.—The tragic death of poor little Poldi, the Italian film "comic," once popular in England, raises the question whether these sensational cinema stunts should be permitted, writes a correspondent to the London Weekly Dispatch.

Poldi, whom war service had prevented from acting lately, was killed in a film airplane crash, an accident near Naples.

A man with Houdini's iron nerve and lightning eye probably runs little more danger in leaping from airplanes and monuments than does John Citizen as the act of stepping off his home-ward motor bus.

The trouble is that every "stunt" artist is not a Houdini. Skill is even more necessary than courage in taking the risks which are involved in the production of the modern film "thriller."

The boldest film heroes have been known to waver when called upon to perform a feat of exceptional daring. In such cases the actual stunt is delegated to a substitute.

These champions "ghosts" are usually good professional acrobats, who change places with the principal when the action is too far from the camera for their features to be identified. The

great man himself is thus enabled to acquire a reputation for courage without running into unnecessary danger.

It was, I think, the wild animal serial, "The Lost City," which had to be restarted because one of the original players lost his nerve after production had been commenced.

In all such pictures untiring confidence of the players in case they are killed before the picture has been completed.

Many well-known stage players, unused to the vigorous life of the film, have found it necessary to employ understudies for the more strenuous scenes.

When Sir Herbert Tree appeared in a cinema version of "Macbeth" in California he was an elderly man quite unfit to cope with the producer's demands for Wild West horsemanship in the realistic battle scenes.

Macbeth's physical prowess was demonstrated by a younger man, while Sir Herbert supplied the emotional work in the studio scenes and close-ups.

Directors of Women's Relations.

WASHINGTON, March 27.—Mrs. John B. Casperly, of St. Louis, has been appointed by Secretary Baker as director of women's relations for the army. She will have general supervision over many hostess houses and will seek to promote co-operation between the army and the women of the country.

Bolsheviks in Malink.

LONDON, March 27.—The Bolsheviks have occupied Malink, a town in the Territory of Kuban, Ciscaucasia, according to a wireless announcement sent out by the Russian Soviet government from Moscow today.

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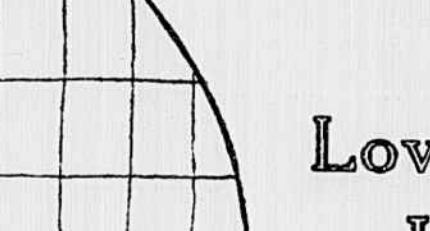
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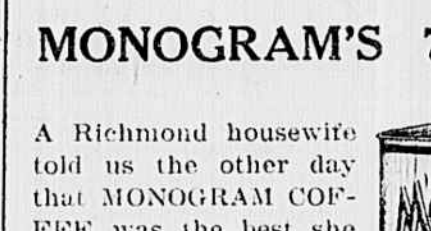
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